

(Washington, DC)— The United States House of Representatives is today expected to pass the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2010, which contains \$10 million secured by Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) to support United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programs for maternal health.

“Maternal mortality is one of the most serious issues facing women on this planet,” Congresswoman Moore said. “For every one woman's death we fail to prevent by boosting investments in maternal health programs, we fail newborns who now face an increased risk of dying themselves. We fail the family, including children pulled from schools to support their families and pick up the duties of the now deceased mother. We fail those communities, by undermining economic development and poverty reduction efforts in the wider community.

“This investment in maternal health will save lives. We can and must continue to use our resources to reduce the needless suffering of millions of women around the world from childbirth and pregnancy-related complications. Too much is at stake.”

Funds for maternal health in this appropriations measure will go toward compassionate, high-quality services in developing countries where maternal mortality rates remain unacceptably high. USAID follows through with care from pre-pregnancy through the postpartum period. The agency provides interventions that address infections and nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy, hygienic practices during delivery, and birth spacing and counseling during postpartum care. USAID also works to improve access to and quality of health services, and to equip birth attendants with the knowledge, skills, drugs and supplies to deliver lifesaving care and reduce preventable maternal and neonatal mortality. These funds will also support iron supplementation, malaria treatment, safe and clean delivery, and treatment of obstetric and newborn complications.

More than 500,000 women worldwide die from pregnancy each year, and millions more endure life-threatening complications. In Ghana, a woman has a 1 in 45 risk of death related to her pregnancy, compared with a 1 in 4,800 risk in the U.S and a 1 in 47,800 risk in Ireland. In some of the world's poorest countries, including Afghanistan, the maternal death risk is as high as 1 in 8.

**View video of Congresswoman Moore on the House floor speaking about maternal mortality:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7ZEc90Xdmk>

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